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April 1998

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People of Color and Mental Health Care

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“This presentation focuses on mental health care issues and persons of color: the problems that the care givers and clients encounter in a culture of ignorance and possible solutions.”

This presentation focuses on mental health care issues and persons of color: the problems that the care givers and clients encounter in a culture of ignorance and possible solutions. There can be harmful effects to that lack of understanding and the ramifications of that person never get their needs met.

Presentation Format

Outline levels of mental health care available in the community

There are many levels of care in Nebraska for mental health services for those in need in our community. To emphasize the least restrictive level of care to protect the civil rights of those in need. Outpatient treatment alternatives as the least restrictive level of care to the most restrictive level of care with inpatient care.

Methods of assessing needs and treatments needed for appropriateness evaluation and validity when used for "people of color" (example IQ test bias)

Overview of community utilized testing measures, for example: IQ test, Beck Depression Inventory, Chemical Dependency Inventories.

Outline fact that mental health problems vary amongst ethnic groups—effects of socio-economic despair and racism's enhancement

Effects of depression. Clinical diagnosis assessment utilized - Beck depression inventory. The effects of chemical dependency treatment to those "persons of color" in need-effects of sensitivity to differences in religious practice and the basics of the 12 step model of treatment.

Terminology - definitions of "people of color"

The different geographic regions of the world and how we "persons of color" represent the future.

Development and role of "people of color" users of mental health services and their representative groups

In this part of the presentation, we will focus on the importance of educating "persons of color" and training to help those in need in our community. This portion will emphasize the importance of mentioning and the power that it can convey to the youth in our community.

This presentation will focus on the children. The effects of a positive environment - an environment to learn, grow and mature - are of great importance. The child "of color" who necessitates mental health services can flourish with an appropriate care giver. This caregiver does work with the parent being sensitive to the parents' background and needs. The best way to help a child is to include the parent - EMPOWER the parent who is seeking help.

Possible Solutions to the problem of racism in mental health care

To conclude the presentation we will focus on numerous solutions that can be utilized in this socio-cultural dilemma. We will discuss the development of supporting staff in existing programs to share their experiences with other providers of care. We will discuss funding of new programs working specifically with those of color in the community. We will discuss the formulation of mental health task force for those persons of color in our community. This support can not only include mentioning but most importantly hope. We will support the development of making race and mental health care a priority in the agenda of agencies within our community.

PRESENTERS

Betty J. Nelum is the Clinical Director of the St. Joseph Behavioral Health Center. Among her numerous duties she is also the Director of the Enterprise Zone Project with the City of Omaha, Director of the Douglas County Adolescent Diversion Program and Director of Student Internship Program through Operation Bridge, as well as the President of the Omaha Optimist Club. Ms. Nelum has touched the lives of many individuals through her caring and dedication. Nelum created/developed an intensive chemical dependency marathon group for first time offenders. Nelum has composed articles for the Employee Assistance Program. Consultation program development and counseling for EAP and SAP for Blair Community School System.

Monalisa McGee Snyder is currently a doctoral student in the department of vocational and adult education. She has been recognized by the Mexican American Student Association for academic excellence. Ms. Snyder has received her master's degree in Science from UNL. Snyder is a regional treatment coordinator with FHC Options Inc., the managed care behavioral system for mental health services for the poor in Nebraska. Snyder has been a therapist with Operation Bridge and during her tenure there was the Assistant Director of the Douglas County Operation Bridge Adolescent Diversion Program. Snyder has taught at Buena Vista University and is also the Human Service Internship Coordinator for that program.